



# NEWS RELEASE

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS**

**BUILDING STRONG**

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## **Corps emphasizes water safety awareness over Memorial Day Weekend**

**Louisville, KY** – With the upcoming Memorial Day weekend, the recreation season is in full swing. That, with the subsequent summer fun comes the need for water safety awareness. Army Corps of Engineers statistics show that most drownings occur during peak visitation, on weekends, during the months of April through September. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is encouraging boaters and non-swimmers to be responsible and stay safe in the water over the upcoming Memorial Day holiday weekend.



***A boater fishes in a restricted and dangerous area too close to the dam. Boaters should follow warnings on cautionary signage on river locks and dam.***

### **Beware of river Locks and Dams while boating in Ohio River**

Many boaters and fisherman on the Ohio River are unaware that locks and dams exist and the threat they pose to fishermen. There are 20 locks and dams on the river from Pittsburgh, Pa., to Cairo, Ill. Cautionary signs are posted on the Louisville District dam structures that warn boaters, fishermen and swimmers to stay back at least 150 ft. from dams and 150 ft. away from lock walls. Vessels are prohibited from entering the restricted areas. The signs should not be ignored. Currents around the dam are very dangerous because the waters are subject to sudden turbulence, undertows, and strong, reverse current.

### **Boaters**

Always wear a life jacket. Wearing a life jacket is the single most important thing recreational boaters can do to increase their chances of surviving an accident on the water. It takes an average strong swimmer 10 minutes to put on a life jacket after entering the water, and that's after they have it in their hands. It only takes an adult an average of 60 seconds to drown. You cannot put on a seatbelt just before a car wreck, and you don't get a chance to put on a life jacket just before a boat accident. A life jacket can't save your life unless you wear it, and holding onto a life jacket can only save you if you are conscious. The U.S. Coast Guard estimates that 90% of boating accident victims might have lived if they had been wearing life jackets.

Boaters should take appropriate safety classes, be familiar with governing state laws and have proper safety equipment on board before boating.

It is important for boaters to know Kentucky *and* Indiana state laws including Illinois – depending on where you recreate. Many states require boater education or boat operator licenses.

Don't overload the boat (consider boat size, the number of passengers, and extra equipment before loading). Check your boat for all required safety equipment. Carry a set of navigational charts. Check the weather forecast. File a float plan with family or friends who are not on the vessel. Alcohol use is the leading contributing factor in nearly 20 percent of all boating accidents. One alcoholic drink can impair balance, vision, judgment and reaction time. Research shows that four hours of boating produces fatigue that simulates drunkenness. Boating fatigue combined with alcohol consumption intensifies the effects of both and increases accident risks.

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## **Swimmers**

At Army Corps of Engineers sites, swimming in non-designated areas is the highest cause for all water-related fatalities nationwide. Don't take chances by over-estimating your swimming skills, and swim only in designated areas. Never dive into lakes and rivers. Never rely on toys such as inner tubes and water wings to stay afloat. Reach or throw a flotation device to help someone in trouble. Never swim alone.

Please make your visit to any recreation area a safe and enjoyable one.

## **Army Corps of Engineers Lake Status due to High Water:**

At Barren River Lake, the Tailwater and Beaver Creek campgrounds are fully open. Presently at Baileys Point, the Narrows and Walnut Creek Boat Ramps are open. All marinas are open and operating, but parking may be limited at some locations. Portions of Bailey's Point campground will be open, but several loops will remain closed. The Narrows campground will be mostly open, with a few sites at The Narrows B loop remaining closed. All beaches at Barren River Lake are closed. For more information, please call the lake information line at 270/646-2122 or the main office at 270/646-2055.

At Green River Lake, Smith Ridge, Holmes Bend and Wilson Creek Campgrounds are operating normally. Several lower campsites at Pikes Ridge Campground and all Green River Lake beaches are still underwater. Due to continued flooding issues, Pikes Ridge Campground will have five sites - sites 56-60 - open for Memorial Day weekend. Call 270-465-4463 for up-to-date information on boat ramp closures and the status of campsites at Pikes Ridge.

At Nolin River Lake water levels will be only two to three feet above normal, and all campgrounds and boat ramps will be operating normally.

At Rough River Lake, Axtel Campground Loops B,C,D,E and Sites 118-121 in F Loop are closed. At North Fork Campground most sites are open except sites 85-94 in G loop which are underwater. However it is not known at this time if restroom facilities will be available at North Fork. Portable toilets will be provided if the system has to remain closed. Beaches at Axtel and North Fork will be closed for the holiday weekend. All boat launching ramps are open. Laurel Branch Campground loops C, D, and E are closed. Cave Creek Campground is open.

For additional information about Corps projects, visit <http://www.corpslakes.us>. Reservations for camping may be made at 1-877-444-6777, or on the internet at: [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov).

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